

What is the Preamble?

The Preamble is the opening statement to the United States Constitution. The preamble explains the reasons why the Framers of the Constitution made our government a republic. By doing this, the founding fathers replaced the Articles of Confederation. The Preamble along with the rest of the Constitution was written over a period of about 6 weeks. The Preamble helped explain why the Constitution was written. However, it is not the law.

The preamble of the United States Constitution is the following:

"We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

Understanding the Preamble

The Preamble can be broken down into many important phrases. All of these phrases are very important for understanding the PURPOSE and GOALS of the United States Constitution. We the people: This phrase means all the citizens of the United States of America. Even though the Constitution was written up by some of the most well-educated men of the new country, the rights given under the document were given to all American citizens.

In order to form a more perfect union: The previous government was based on the Articles of Confederation, which were very limited. When the Framers wrote this, they felt that they were making new government that would be a better way to govern the country.

Establish justice: The reasons why there was Revolution against England were still important to the American citizens, so they wanted to make sure that they would have justice under the Constitution.

Insure domestic tranquility: One of the main reasons why the Constitutional Convention was held was because of Shays' Rebellion. This was an uprising of farmers in Massachusetts against the state for having to repay war debts. Citizens were worried with the keeping peace within the country's borders.

Provide for the common defense: There was still a change of being attacked by other countries. No individual state had the power to defend itself against attacks. Because of this, the Framers knew that it was important for the states to defend the nation together.

Promote the general welfare: This phrase meant that the well-being of the citizens would be taken care of as well as possible by the Federal government.

Secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity: The point of this phrase in the Preamble, and the constitution as a whole was to help protect the country's hard-earned rights for liberty, unjust laws, and freedom from a tyrannical government.

Ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America: This last phrase of the Preamble is a powerful statement saying that the people made this document, and the people give the country its power.

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Understanding the Preamble

<u>The Preamble</u>	<u>What do these words mean? Look them up in the dictionary.</u>	<u>How does our government do this today?</u>
<u>Establish Justice</u> - Injustice and unfair laws were upsetting to Americans in 1787. They remembered how the British courts did not give them fair trials. Their voices were not heard in the British government.	<u>Establish Justice</u>	
<u>Insure Domestic Tranquility</u> - There were some revolts against the American government after the Revolutionary War. Without a new strong national government, Americans were afraid that the country would not last.	<u>Insure Domestic Tranquility</u>	
<u>Provide for the Common Defense</u> - America was afraid of an attack by others and no state army could protect people all over the U.S. Britain, Spain, and the Native American tribes were all threats to the U.S.	<u>Provide for the Common Defense</u>	
<u>Promote the General Welfare</u> - The Founders of the U.S. government wanted every citizen to benefit from a strong government. A national government would make it easier for people to do business with other states and countries.	<u>Promote the General Welfare</u>	
<u>Secure the Blessings of Liberty</u> - Americans fought for the right to liberty in the American Revolution. They wanted a country where all citizens could share their opinions without fear of a king.	<u>Secure the Blessings of Liberty</u>	

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Rewriting the Preamble

The Preamble to the United States Constitution lays out the purpose of our government. Read the Preamble and write it in your own words.

We the people of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish the Constitution for the United States of America.

Write the Preamble in your own words:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper appears slightly aged or off-white. There is no handwriting or other markings on the page.